

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01  
MCT-01 IO-13 /071 W  
-----300659Z 028541 /12

R 291312Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6730  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: IS, LE, SY, SA  
SUBJECT: EXCERPTS FROM SAUDI ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITORIAL ON ARAB-ISRAE  
LI  
TENSIONS

1. THERE FOLLOWS EXCERPTS FROM AN EDITORIAL IN THE DEC 29  
ARAB NEWS, A LOCAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, ON THE SUBJECT  
OF ISRAELI-LEBANON BORDER TENSIONS. EMBASSY HAS NOTED THAT  
ARAB NEWS OCCASIONALLY REFLECTS OFFICIAL SAG VIEWS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: UNDER TITLE OF "SOUTHER WINDS". SLOWLY BUT  
SLYLY AN ELABORATE TRAP IS BEING BUILT IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. AND THE FACT THAT THE  
AREA IS DORMANT AT THE MOMENT MUST NOT ALLOW THE ARABS TO BE  
CAUGHT OFF GUARD. FOREIGN NEWS AGENCIES ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT  
MOVEMENT OF PALESTINIAN HEAVY ARMS TO SOUTH LEBANON AND OF THE  
PRESENCE OF ABOUT 25,000 WELL-ARMED COMMANDOS IN THE REGION.  
THE DISPATCHES ARE RECALLING THAT ISRAEL HAS THREATENED ACTION  
AGAINST THE RETURN OF THE PALESTINIANS TO THE SOUTH. ISRAEL,  
NATURALLY ENOUGH, IS PLAYING ITS PART WELL; FIRST, IT CLAIMED  
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IT HAD NO INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE AGENCY STORIES, THEN IT  
CONFIRMED THE NEWS AFTER "INTELLIGENCE CHECKS ON THE SPOT."

WHILE NOT DENYING THAT PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS MAY BE  
MOVING TO SOUTH LEBANON, WE REALLY FEEL THAT THE FIGURE OF  
25,000 FIGHTERS IS EXTREMELY BLOATED . . . SOUTH LEBANON  
NEVER ACCOMMODATED MORE THAN A COUPLE OF THOUSAND FIGHTERS,

EVEN WHEN THE WHOLE AREA WAS OUTSIDE THE AUTHORITY OF THE BEIRUT GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT CAN BE SAFELY ASSUMED THAT PALESTINIANS (WILL DO THEIR BEST NOT TO) ALLOW AN ACCURATE HEAD COUNT. . .

ISRAEL IS OBVIOUSLY BUILDING A FALSE CASE AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS IN THE SOUTH, NOT NECESSARILY TO INTERVENE MILITARILY THERE, BUT POSSIBLY TO MAINTAIN THE CHOICE OF INTERVENING IF OTHER CONSIDERATIONS MAKE INTERVENTION NECESSARY. SUCH CONSIDERATIONS ABOUND AT THE MOMENT AND THEY INCLUDE THE HAZY POLITICAL SCENE WITH THE FALL OF THE RABIN GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY'S DEPRESSED ECONOMY. SOUTH LEBANON COULD SERVE AS A DIVERSION. ISRAEL COULD ALSO USE IT SHOULD THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION START EXERTING PRESSURE ON IT TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE ARABS. ISRAEL WOULD THEN CLAIM THAT NON-INTERVENTION IN SOUTH LEBANON WHILE IT IS "INFESTED" WITH PALESTINIAN "TERRORISTS" IS A CONCESSION ON ITS PART.

THE DOMESTIC SCENE IN ISRAEL, HOWEVER, COULD OVERTAKE ANY SUCH CONSIDERATIONS AND PROMPT THE ISRAELI LEADERS INTO A DESPERATE ADVENTURE. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PALESTINIANS AND THE SYRIANS AS THE ARAB POWER TO RECKON WITH IN THE REGION, TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT ISRAEL IS DENIED ANY EASY EXCUSE FOR INTERVENTION IN THE SOUTH. END TEXT.  
PORTER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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